REMARKS

The Office Action dated July 17, 2003 has been received and carefully studied.

The Examiner objects to the amendment under 35 U.S.C. §132 filed August 27, 2001 because it introduces new matter. The Examiner states that the amendments to Figure 5 and pages 21 and 23 of the specification add new matter.

The objection is respectfully traversed.

The matter added to pages 21 and 23 and to Figure 5 is fully supported by the original disclosure. The two valves at the top and bottom of the column of Figure 5 are identical to those of Figures 3 and 4. This is expressly made clear in the paragraph bridging pages 20 and 21 of the original disclosure, where it is stated that Figure 5 shows a chromatography column system that includes a chromatography column 101 as previously described with reference to Figures 1, 3 and 4 and including top and bottom valves as shown in Figures 3 and 4. Thus, the original disclosure expressly states that the column 101 of Figure 5 is that of Figures 3 and 4. The amendments previously presented simply correct Figure 5 and the corresponding text to be consistent with Figures 3 and 4. They do not add new matter.

The Examiner rejects claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over each of Unger and Munch. The Examiner states that these claims read on each of these references, or at best merely optimize the steps of each of these references to enhance separation.

By the accompanying amendment, limitations of claim 2 have been incorporated into claim 1.

Unger et al. disclose a chromatography column and method for producing chromatography packings. However, Unger et al. nowhere disclose or suggest circulating the slurry from the slurry

vessel and directly back to the slurry vessel as now recited in amended claim 1. All recirculation of the slurry in Unger et al. is through the column.

Munch discloses a method and apparatus for the wet filling of chromatography columns. An English translation of Munch is submitted herewith for the convenience of the Examiner. Sorbent, suspended in an eluent, is fed into the column and thickened by filtration under pressure. Eluant is recycled from the base of the chromatography column back to supply vessels through suitable valving. However, nowhere does Munch disclose or suggest circulating the slurry from the slurry vessel and directly back to the slurry vessel as now recited in amended claim 1. All recirculation of the slurry in Munch is through the column.

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing.

Respectfully submitted,

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Listing of Claims

1. (Currently amended) A method of packing a chromatography column with a chromatography media from a slurry vessel in which a slurry containing the chromatography column to pack the column and excess fluid from the chromatography column during packing is returned to the slurry vessel, and further including circulating the slurry from the slurry vessel and directly back to the slurry vessel, either continuously during the packing of the chromatography column or while the packing of the chromatography column is temporarily suspended.

2. (canceled)

3. (Original) A method of preparing a slurry including a chromatography media prior to packing a chromatographic column with the chromatography media including adding the components of the slurry to a slurry vessel and then circulating the slurry from the slurry vessel and returning them to the slurry vessel.

4. (Currently amended) A method of packing a chromatography column with a chromatography media comprising preparing a slurry containing the chromatography media prior to packing of the chromatography column as claimed in claim 3 followed by packing the chromatography column with the chromatography media by the method of claim 1 [[or 2]].

5. (Withdrawn) A chromatography system including a chromatography column and a slurry vessel, a pump means for pumping a slurry containing chromatography media from the slurry vessel to the chromatography column to effect packing of the chromatography column and a transport means arranged to transport excess fluid output from the chromatography column during packing back to the slurry vessel.

6. (Withdrawn) A chromatography system as claimed in claim 5 including a further pump means operable to circulate the slurry from the slurry vessel and back to the slurry vessel without

passing through the chromatography column.